United Nations S/PV.5189

Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5189th meeting

Tuesday, 31 May 2005, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Løj	(Denmark)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. D'Alotto
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

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05-36552 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Zebari (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2005/337, which contains the text of a letter dated 24 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mrs. Anne Patterson, representative of the United States, on behalf of the multinational force.

Mrs. Patterson (United States of America): In Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), Council members agreed to review the mandate of the multinational force either at the request of the Government of Iraq or by 8 June 2005. To facilitate that review, I am pleased to report to the Security Council on behalf of the multinational force, with its 28 member countries and 160,000 personnel, on the efforts and progress of the force in fulfilling its mandate.

I would also like to call the attention of Council members to the letter of 24 May from Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari to the Security Council President, which requests the Council to allow for the continuation of the multinational force mandate until the completion of the political process or until Iraq can provide for its security needs on its own.

The mandate authorizes the multinational force to take all necessary measures to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability in Iraq, including by preventing and deterring terrorism, in order to allow the Iraqi people to implement freely and without intimidation the timetable and programme for the political process and to benefit from reconstruction and rehabilitation activities. The multinational force also provides assistance in building the capacity of the Iraqi security forces and institutions through recruiting, training, equipping, mentoring and monitoring, and provides security for the United Nations.

Key goals for the multinational force are to develop increasingly capable Iraqi security forces and to transfer more and more security responsibilities to them. Those are essential to ending attacks by insurgents and terrorists and to developing the Iraqi public's confidence in its own security forces. The efforts of the multinational and Iraqi forces to improve the security environment are buttressed by progress in the political process, endorsed by resolution 1546 (2004). That progress encourages all Iraqis to affect their political agenda through peaceful, democratic means and to renounce terrorism.

The multinational force is committed to staying the course in Iraq and will continue to assist the Iraqi Government in providing security. In doing so, the multinational force is committed to coordinating closely with the Iraqi Government at the local and national levels to employ more effective tactics to defeat the insurgents and prevent their attacks.

A harsh security situation in Iraq has confronted the new Iraqi Government. Dramatic, headline-grabbing attacks against Iraqi citizens, aimed at breaking their will, continue. In the face of that violence, Iraqis have been increasingly willing to assist the Iraqi and multinational forces. Iraqis also continue to volunteer for the ranks of the security forces, and those forces are assuming increased responsibility. We welcome the commitment of Prime Minister Jaafari, who has said that "the Government will strike with a

fist of iron every criminal who tries to harm any citizen, be he a Sunni, a Shiite, an Assyrian, a Kurd or a Turkmen".

In the long run, Iraqis want to defend themselves, and the multinational force is making progress in its goal of helping Iraqi security forces move towards self-reliance. To date, some 165,000 Iraqi soldiers and police officers have been trained and equipped. The Iraqi army has over 90 battalion-level units conducting operations. Some of those forces conduct independent security operations, and others operate alongside or with the support of the multinational force. The Iraqi battalions are out in the cities and rural areas of the country, and they are getting results. Iraqi police and military forces are shouldering the burden in 12 of Iraq's 18 provinces. There is much work to be done and the challenge should not be minimized, but those are valuable achievements.

The multinational force will continue to transition responsibilities to Iraqi security forces until their capabilities are sufficient to defeat the insurgents and terrorists and to provide security without the force's assistance. To that end, the force will continue to focus on partnering, mentoring, teaching and capacity-building.

Transitioning responsibilities also includes giving Iraqi forces responsibility for particular areas, as possible. That has already started in Baghdad and Mosul with one military brigade each, and will continue over time. Multinational force and Iraqi commanders place a high premium on close cooperation to ensure that their actions are complementary and coordinated. Accordingly, joint headquarters have been established at the national and provincial levels to coordinate multinational force, Iraqi Ministry of Defence and Iraqi Ministry of Interior operations.

The multinational force, in coordination with the Iraqi Government and security forces, international donors, and national and international non-governmental organizations, continues to support a number of reconstruction and assistance activities in order to maintain stability and security. Activities include building schools and hospitals, improving the infrastructure of roads, water and sanitation, and removing landmines and unexploded ordinance. The multinational force has also trained Iraqi engineers to build local capacity to undertake such projects.

In previous quarterly briefings on behalf of the multinational force, I have welcomed the assistance of Ambassador Qazi and the United Nations Assistance Mission For Iraq (UNAMI), as endorsed by resolution 1546 (2004) and requested by the Iraqi Government. The United Nations has a leading and vital role to play in providing valuable assistance to Iraq's political transition. We urge the United Nations to provide that assistance as fully as possible, as requested by the Iraqi Government. To that end, we urge the United Nations to deploy the necessary experts as soon as possible.

We recognize the difficult security challenges that Iraq poses to the United Nations, and we welcome the willingness of UNAMI and Secretariat staff to work closely with the multinational force to ensure that United Nations personnel face minimum risk and deliver maximum support to Iraq. Multinational force units from Georgia and Romania, with United States and United Kingdom support, protect United Nations facilities and staff in Baghdad and Basra. In addition, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden have made financial contributions for UNAMI protection. As the United Nations expands its activities in Iraq, its security needs will increase. We encourage countries to consider additional assistance to the protection force, through the provision of either funds or troops.

Consistent with Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), the multinational force is in Iraq to help the Iraqis maintain security and stability until they can do so unassisted. While the multinational force assists with the provision of security, it also works to increase Iraqi capacity to assume that task. A specific timeline for the withdrawal of multinational forces cannot be set. The multinational force will not remain in Iraq any longer than necessary, but nor, consistent with the Iraqi request, will it leave until the Iraqis can meet the serious security challenges they face.

Any decision regarding force size will be driven by events on the ground. The degree to which the Iraqi people are satisfied with the way the Transitional National Assembly approaches the constitutional process and works to include all Iraqis will be of obvious relevance to prospects for the future. We realize that this is a difficult process and that we must be patient. Acts of terrorism and insurgency will not just disappear. We have seen that with the spate of

violence following the formation of the new Government.

The Iraqi people are in the midst of forging a new path — a free, democratic path, one that is chosen by them. The multinational force remains committed to working to create an environment that fosters such progress.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq.

Mr. Zebari (Iraq): In accordance with paragraph 12 of resolution 1546 (2004), adopted unanimously on 8 June 2004, the mandate of the multinational force in Iraq is now due for review. The newly elected Government of Iraq, and the Iraqi people, pay tribute and express gratitude to the multinational force for its contribution towards establishing security in our country. In the exercise of its mandate, it has helped Iraq to accomplish another year of historic and dramatic progress on the road towards democracy and stability — progress on which I am now pleased to report to the Security Council.

In June 2004, the Iraqi Interim Government reasserted Iraq's sovereignty and assumed full responsibility and authority in guiding Iraq from being an occupied country to an emerging democracy. That transformation adhered to the political process mandated in Iraq's transitional administrative law and endorsed by Security Council resolution 1546 (2004).

The Interim Government and the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq delivered on their pledge to hold free and fair elections, on time, throughout the country. Those elections heralded a new dawn of optimism, and inspired confidence in our democratic transition. The efforts of the authorities and the remarkable courage of the Iraqi people on 30 January were duly recognized throughout the world. We have proved that political transition can be orderly, democratic and expressed by the free will of the Iraqi people through the ballot box, not through violence. For the first time in five decades, we have had a peaceful transition of power from one Government to the next.

In the formation of the Transitional Government, we reached out to all communities in Iraq and forged a national unity Government that is inclusive and representative. We did include new members in the new Government, sharing power with those who boycotted or did not fare well in the January elections. I am pleased to report to the Security Council that those who chose not to take part in the January elections or who were unable to participate because of the intimidation campaign in their areas, are now recognizing their misjudgement and rallying themselves in preparation for the December round of elections.

We remind the Security Council that each step in our political transition has been implemented so far according to the timetable endorsed in paragraph 4 of resolution 1546 (2004), and we reaffirm Iraq's commitment to meeting the deadlines for the completion of that process.

Although our achievements to date are praiseworthy, they have been made at great cost to the Iraqi people and our security forces, as well as with the sacrifice of the multinational forces. While my Government is committed to meeting its obligations under resolution 1546 (2004), we would like to acknowledge that we in Iraq still face a destructive campaign of terror and violence that aims to derail the political process and undo the progress that has been achieved so far.

As I wrote to you, Madam President, on 24 May, our country continues to face an armed insurgency, including foreign elements opposed to Iraq's transition to democratic rule. Despite our continuing efforts to build up our security forces, those forces cannot as yet assume full responsibility for maintaining our national security and defending our borders.

We believe that, in order to complete the transitional process and build on the political achievement to date, we need the multinational force to continue to provide its essential contribution to our security. I would like to reiterate my Government's formal request for a continuation of the multinational force's mandate. As we enter into the constitutional process, we anticipate that the campaign of destruction and intimidation will continue, perpetrated by a deadly mix of remnants of the former regime determined to turn back the clock, and foreign elements whose sole agenda is to destroy the ongoing political process. Their horrific and merciless tactics may shift, but their evil intentions remain the same — to foment civil division and spread terror among innocent civilians throughout the country in an attempt to undermine the new democratic system.

But as they destroy, we rebuild. On 30 January, Iraqis sent a loud and clear message that they will not be intimidated and that their future will not be dictated by terrorists and supporters of tyranny. The terrorists threatened that they would wash the streets of Baghdad with the blood of voters. In response, 8.5 million Iraqis defiantly and courageously headed to the polls to cast their vote against the past and to vote instead for the freedom and peace to which they aspire.

We recognize that the transition we are going through from dictatorship to democracy is fraught with many challenges. The total collapse of the State and its institutions has created internal complications and instability. There are foreign elements that are determined to exploit the transition in Iraq for their own extreme agendas, to prolong the suffering of the Iraqi people and to undermine the stability mission of the multinational force. We have repeatedly urged each of our neighbouring countries to abide by their obligations under resolution 1546 (2004) to prevent the transit of terrorists to and from Iraq, arms for terrorists, and financing that would support terrorists. Some have been more forthcoming than others in their response. To our regret, despite repeated assurances of their willingness to cooperate, some have refused to translate those assurances into concrete action.

We learned recently that Syria has stopped more than 1,000 foreign fighters from entering Iraq from Syria.

We welcome that action, but note that it confirms our long-held view that Syria has been one of the main transit routes for foreign terrorists, as well as for the remnants of the previous regime. Although we are in continuous dialogue with our neighbours to establish security mechanisms through regional cooperation, in good faith with the Iraqi Transitional Government, we urge them to put an end to the flow of those terrorists who could wreak havoc, not only in Iraq, but beyond.

Here we would like to urge our brothers in Syria to do more to prevent the movement of extremist elements from entering our country.

For our part, in tactical and strategic cooperation with the multinational force, we have been steadily building the capacity of our security, police and military forces. In turn those forces have assumed increasing responsibility for the stability of our country. Coordinated by the relevant ministries, in close cooperation with the multinational force, our forces have grown, and efforts to increase training and equipping them, and improving their performance, are ongoing. They have shifted from defensive to offensive Iraqi-led security initiatives. As combat and security responsibilities have been gradually turned over to our forces, they have simultaneously increased their intelligence capabilities, and are producing effective results in their mission.

Here I would like to report that we are proud of the courage and enthusiasm of the new recruits to our forces: brave men and women who stand daily on the front line, despite horrific losses to their ranks from daily suicide attacks on patrols and recruiting centres. The number of recruits volunteering to serve their country continues to increase.

The next step in our transition is the most critical test for the future of our country. The mandate of the new Transitional Government, outlined in Security Council resolution 1546 (2004), is to draft a new permanent constitution by 15 August. This will be subject to a national referendum in October, leading to general elections for a constitutionally elected Government in December 2005. Success in drawing up the new constitution will be the definitive turning point for Iraq's stability and the entire process of democratic change.

Drafting this cornerstone document of our future will also be an exercise in compromise and consensus-building. It will bring together the competing agendas for all Iraqi groups and produce a unified national agenda. The new constitution will enshrine the ideas of any free people in its charter: pluralism, democratic rights, federalism, human rights and civil liberties. It will also embrace our diversity within our unity and reaffirm Iraq's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. That is a tremendous challenge, but we all realize what is at stake, and we are determined to meet the challenge. We recognize that the constitution is neither just for this generation, nor just for the winners of the January election, but for all Iraqis and for future generations to come — who all have a stake in its success.

A satisfactory formula can only be reached with the input and consensus of all the country's communities. As we have just learned from the European experience, a permanent constitution is unlikely to succeed if drafted behind closed doors, in isolation from the constituency.

We are reaching out and engaging all groups in a broad consultative dialogue in the writing of the constitution. In our social, religious and ethnic mosaic, the only route to peace, tolerance and national unity is for all Iraqis to be represented in this process. My Government is committed to ensuring that the constitutional process will be inclusive.

The constitution will provide the foundation for the new Iraq and will be an Iraqi-authored document, but we are facing a tight deadline to complete the drafting by 15 August. The United Nations has a history of experience it can bring to advising the drafting committee, which has already begun its work. We are aware that the United Nations is moving to extend its technical assistance, and we urge that the process be accelerated. We believe any delay in drafting and ratifying the constitution could provide a vacuum that anti-democratic forces could exploit.

Here we need the awareness and engagement of the international community to achieve our goals. Let me express our gratitude to Ambassador Ashraf Qazi in his important role as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. We also welcome the recent developments towards staffing new United Nations facilities for the United Nations Assistant Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in Erbil and Basra.

We also remind the Security Council of the effective and important work of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq in the previous elections. In that regard, we urge the United Nations to expedite the appointment of a United Nations Electoral Adviser to continue supporting the Commission's preparations for the upcoming general elections in December.

The mandate of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) is also due for review at this time. The Government of Iraq believes that IAMB is useful in promoting greater transparency as the Iraqi Government, at its discretion, disburses the resources of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI). As such, we propose to continue the IAMB mandate until the end of the political process in Iraq. At the same time, we urge all Member States to take seriously their responsibilities under resolutions 1483 (2003) and 1518 (2003) to deposit funds into the DFI.

An international conference on Iraq in Brussels next month is being organized by the United States and the European Union, together with the Government of Iraq. We hope to seize the momentum generated by the success of the January elections and the instalment of a new Government to strengthen the existing international partnership and forge new support for Iraq's reconstruction, military-security development and democratic transition. We are encouraged by the positive attitude demonstrated during the preparations, and we welcome those participants who are dealing with our country constructively, in good faith and with respect for the new order.

We look forward to the day when our forces are able to assume full responsibility for maintaining our national security, at which time there will be no need for the engagement of the multinational force in Iraq. Until then we need the continued presence of the multinational force in Iraq. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks and gratitude to the States participating in the multinational force for their valued contribution.

Finally, the newly elected Government of Iraq recognizes what its people expect of them, and we endeavour to deliver. We are confident that we will succeed. Our people prove that the majority want democracy. Iraqis should be respected for their resilience and determination in rising up to the challenges they face every day. Violence will not distract us from the main goal of building a democratic, pluralistic, federal and unified Iraq.

The President: I thank Mr. Zebari for his statement.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to a private meeting following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.